

BEACHFEST 2006

Below is an article that was sent to those ARRL members who chose to be included in their mailing list. I found the article listed below to be interesting reading and in preparation for our Hamfest I thought our entire membership should take the time and read it. To read the entire edition of their September newsletter follow this link http://www.w3udx.org/images/Tell-A-Ham/tah_09_061.pdf .

I became associated with this extraordinary club back in 1989 just after receiving my first license, KC4IGY. I then became inactive for the next 8 years for many reasons. The main one was that I promised my self that I would not unpack any equipment when I moved into my new home in 1994 until I upgraded to the General Class license. That did not occur until March of 2002. I have resurfaced and renewed my interest with the Grand Strand ARC and do not regret it for an instance. We have a strong organization and like most it comprises of about ¼ of the membership volunteering for any activity that we undertake. The good thing is that in most cases it is a different 25% for the various functions. What needs to happen on November 11th, which is the date for the Club's largest event, is a membership turnout of more than the normal. My concern is if that does not happen we might fall into the same category as the Butler County ARA. Please do not let this happen, it is only one Saturday for you to reserve of your time for almost the entire second half of a year. With your support, this event can net a large amount of our clubs yearly finances. Please contact Robert Battle, KE4HGB to volunteer your time.

73

Bob Gagliardi, N4XML

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SECTION CONVENTION HOST CANCELS FUTURE HAMFESTS

Just two days after hosting the ARRL Western Pennsylvania Section Convention September 10, the Butler County Amateur Radio Association (BCARA) <http://www.w3udx.org/> voted to throw in the towel and get out of the hamfest business. The main reason, cited in the September issue of the club's Tell-A-Ham newsletter, is a lack of member involvement.

"The few, dependable workers have burned out," wrote BCARA Treasurer Kevin Berry, KF4RMA, who edits the newsletter and took on tasks this year as hamfest vendor chairman, parking chairman, treasurer and flyer preparation, among others. According to the newsletter, fewer than one-quarter of the club's 80 members pitched in to make the hamfest happen this year, and nearly all handled multiple duties during the event.

The September 10 gathering at the Butler County Farm Show Fairgrounds was the club's 29th annual hamfest. Whether it's also the last, BCARA President Jim Love, W1JHL, told ARRL, is in the hands of the membership.

"If we can get the manpower that is required to support the hamfest we will continue the tradition," he said. "However, this year, as in the recent past, we have not received the needed help."

SPECIAL EVENT STATION INFORMATION

Have you ever worked a special event station on HF? Special Event stations are set up to commemorate an event of special significance. You don't necessarily have to operate from the special location, but it sure is a lot of fun to set up a station and operate under portable conditions similar to Field Day! You don't have to use emergency power, because the purpose of a special event is not to prove readiness for emergency operation, rather, the focus is on the event location. Special Events can last for a few hours, a couple of days, or more than a week!

The Route 66 on the air special event has been in progress the last several days. The operators live near Route 66 and operate from their home stations. A couple of the operators are also driving and parking beside Route 66 and operating from their mobile stations. Also on the air as I am writing this is a group of 14 operators who are operating portable at special locations along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Also on the air is a station commemorating

Special Event stations are allowed to apply for special 1 by 1 call sign, such as K5T (for the Tecumseh Frontier Days Celebration) or K4B (for the 15th Annual Kentucky Bourbon Festival).

I believe we have many opportunities to host special event stations here in our area. We could host one in commemoration of Brookgreen Gardens, or Atalaya Castle at Huntington Beach State Park. The Sun Fun Festival would also be a good reason to host a special event station. The local Blue Crab festival would be a good demonstration of our skills, and we would most likely be welcomed at any of the events our local winery (La Belle Amie) holds. The first day of the Spot fishing run, the closure of Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, really anything that we would like the world to know about our area and our history would be a great reason to host a special event!

There are minor costs associated with hosting a special event. The largest expense is printing certificates to be mailed out. It is considered usual and customary to require contacting stations to send an SASE (Self Addressed Stamped Envelope) to defer the costs of postage and envelopes. The log books are a minor cost.

To get information on current and upcoming special event stations, the information is usually printed in QST, but it can also be found on the internet at: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/spev.html> .

If you are interested in helping to set up and host a special event station, get in contact with me, Web Williams at 843-655-5961 and we'll discuss the details. Of course burgers on the grill during the operation would be mandatory!!! All that's required is a willingness to have fun and enjoy yourself!

73, -Web Williams, KR4WM

The Hidden Season for Radio

By Robert Hawkins KI4HEE

Heading into October, another summer season has come and gone. Here along the Grand Strand, the cooler days & nights bring on the "Hidden Season", a wonderful time of blissful mild weather. It's also a great time to maintain your base radio gear in preparation for a winter season of "radio" activity.

While the summer rolled through with hot temperatures both day & night, all that heat and humidity can take quite a toll on outside radio gear such as antennas, coax, rotors, and anything else you may have stuck up on your roof or up your tower. While the days are still long and temperatures up on the roof a lot cooler, it's a perfect time to spend a minute up on your ladder giving everything a once-over. Check for moisture, dirt, or corrosion on your outside coax connections. Be sure to check any gaskets & seals you gear may have for cracks caused by heat and ultraviolet light, causing watertight things to leak.

Coax running from the antenna to the shack is subject to wear and tear caused by wind, heat, rain, and exposure to the sun. Check for any chafes and cracks on the coax outer sheath. While the weather is so favorable, it's the perfect time to bring everything you've got hanging up, up to speed.

While the antenna system is 80% of your radio, an additional 10% of it is your outside grounding and antenna support structure. Take the time to check for loose or corroded guy wires & turnbuckles, failed anchors, cruddy green copper grounds and other little things that become big things at the worst time.

Inside the shack you can "winterize" things by cleaning out filters & cooling vents of accumulated dust. While you're at it, take a moment to police the grounds a bit, that summer project there on the bench needs to be finished up or put away till next summer.

The "Hidden Season" is the harbinger of a winter of Radio where it's more inviting to stay inside beside the rig. Let it also be the season of fix-up, clean-up, to insure your equipment has what it takes to make it through to next summer.